

SHORT SKIRTS, AID TO HEALTH, MAY DEFEY FASHION

By MARTHA COMAN.

UPON the swing of a golf club depends the width of the skirt, a tennis racket decides the type of corset a woman shall wear, while a butterfly dive disposes of all discussion as to the propriety of a one piece bathing suit. Such is the importance of comfort when one is engaged in outdoor sports.

These athletic activities of women, which have become popular within the last decade and a half, have revolutionized the feminine silhouette and changed bonds into freedom. No women in the world are less hampered by their clothes than the American women, and there is no other country where outdoor sports are so generally indulged in as here.

Followers of Sport May Defy

Paris Dress Edict This Year

So devoted have sports loving women become to their comfortably short skirts that when Paris recently decided that feminine ankles were to be shrouded in folds of fashionable material American women openly rebelled. They declared they just wouldn't go back to long skirts, or even to skirts much longer than they had been wearing.

Not one of the dozens interviewed on the subject of whether American womanhood was again to become an adjunct of the Street Cleaning Department and help sweep up curbs and sidewalks favored the ankle length skirt. And invariably each based her objection on the discomfort such a skirt entails when going up and down elevated or subway steps or boarding a surface car.

Sport fashions have been accepted as the daytime dress for the business and professional woman. They all know the comfort of a sport suit and the bloomers and brassiere and pliable corset worn underneath, and to support them in their determination to cling to comfort for working hours they call attention to the trim appearance of women who dress in this style.

Physicians and athletic instructors stand by them in their refusal to permit any radical change in the favored sport dress. Health Commissioner Copeland heartily approves the short skirt for everyday wear, both for looks and sanitary attributes. So does Dr. Thomas D. Wood, athletic director of Teachers College, and for the same reasons. Both declared the sensible dress of to-day about as sensible as ever had been achieved by the combined aid of those who designed fashions and those who wear them.

An act of Congress, which permitted the late Dr. Mary Walker to wear male attire because she considered it more comfortable and better adapted to her activities than the long, wide, haircloth stiffened skirts and leg o' mutton sleeves in vogue in the heyday of her career, never quite accustomed or reconciled the public to seeing a woman dressed in men's trousers. Yet the recent appearance of young women wearing knickerbockers as they strolled down Fifth avenue caused scarcely a ripple of excitement among the thousands of afternoon shoppers. Sports have accomplished wonders in the metamorphosis of feminine clothes.

At Last Men Are Used to

Seeing Women in Trousers

If the world hadn't grown accustomed to seeing women riding astride in the neatest of breeches and coats, or hiking over the country roads in khaki knickerbockers, or skidding in brother's army togs, or playing golf in the trimmest of bifurcated tweeds, there probably would have been more necks craned to see the fair pedestrians as they proceeded down New York city's greatest promenade. We are getting used to common sense in dress, though the common sense is by no means the ugly thing it formerly was.

The "Rainy Daisies," as the members of that club which instigated the fashion of the short skirts are called, gave a vivid picture of what New York city's streets looked like twenty-five years ago, when the feminine members of society were unwillingly enlisted in the street cleaning job. The little movement started then by a group of women shocked the public more perhaps than cigarette smoking or skirts worn up to the knees. And all they wanted was the public's approval of a fashion that lifted hems just a tiny bit above the ground.

Did they get it? Ask any of that little band of "Rainy Daisies" who trotted forth in wet weather and in snow and even in sunshine wearing skirts that measured exactly four inches from the ground. They will tell you that instead of approval they were jeered at by men and women small boys threw stones at them and society women drew aside their own trailing skirts as if there might be contamination in the very presence of a dress so shocking that it showed the wearer walking on a perfectly good pair of feet instead of on stilts or wheels.

Physicians Approve of Women's Demand That Unsanitary, Dust Raising Dresses Be Barred and Reform Gained Originally by Rainy Day Club Be Continued---Sports Responsible

The accompanying illustrations show how the influence of sports has affected woman's dress. Note the one piece bathing suit contrasted with the old time one and the clinging ankle length walking suit with the modern business dress.



And the expressions that these matrons of the unemancipated group wore on their faces would have discouraged, frightened and slain the short skirt wearers if the thoughts behind the expressions could have been realized.

When this first organized group of women decided it was high time to lift the hem of dresses to a decent and sanitary height above the pavements and to put a stop to the carrying of germs from curbs and pavements to hearth rugs all they asked for was a modest four inches to escape, though they voted in favor of a skirt six inches from the floor for those who liked them so astonishingly short. But the club members themselves were satisfied to accept a freedom of less.

And to let the public know that they were in dead earnest, that they stood for a principle, for an advance for women, for greater health and comfort for their own and future generations, and not for a mere fashion, they adopted a uniform and topped it with a blue badge which they wore on one shoulder.

Rainy Daisies Led Van

In Short Skirt Crusade

The movement gained converts. Skirts lost contact with the ground but they won approval in various quarters, and at last dressmakers were compelled to cut their models after the accepted fashion of the so-called rainy day skirt. Dressmakers then, as now, tried to discourage an attempt on the part of women to dictate as to what they should wear. But the women won out and they have continued to hold on to their short skirts ever since.

Periodically these makers of women's garments sought to revive the long, trailing skirt, according to the reminiscences of one

of the original "Rainy Day" band, but they met with no success. They would lengthen skirts by an inch or two one season and the public would rebel. They'd try it another season, and the same thing happened. Dressmakers might determine the width of a skirt, but they could never dictate as to its length if they set the fashion for anything beyond a certain height from the ground.

If in those twenty-five years since the first sanitary skirt made its appearance dressmakers have been unable to put women into long skirts what chance of doing it have they now, even though Paris favors the ankle length and is predicting that no matter how much of a hue and cry American women raise against this hampering fashion they will come to it in the end? The "Rainy Daisies" calmly point to the history of their own movement and feel perfectly satisfied that the anti-movement will die a natural death.

A skirt that just covers the knees was the last thing in the world that this club had in mind when it marched forth as a group of protesting women, women bent on abolishing wet, bedraggled clothes, sopping shoes and ankles and dripping petticoats. Never did they expect to see their modest protest so fruitfully exaggerated. They frankly acknowledge that the skirt movement has gotten away from them, but they point hopefully to signs that the worst is past and that modesty will again characterize the lower portion of feminine dress. Comfort and wholesomeness was what they worked for, and they feel that both are still possible without sacrificing modesty.

The four inches from the floor skirt was not the only startling change that the "Rainy Daisies" were responsible for. Their dress rebellion was started at the psychological moment, for women were getting tired of their nipped-in at the waist corsets, the diaphragm squeezing bodices, the tight sleeves or the enormous stiffened ones, in

fact, the harness that fashion had evolved for one-half of the human race.

It was three or four years later that the straight front corset made its debut and waists began to be let out to something like their normal circumference. While diaphragms and abdomens came in for their share of freedom. The hour glass effect disappeared with the long skirt, and then women started all sorts of freedom and comfort innovations until they have developed a type of dress that is more comfortable and free than men's ordinary clothes. Men's tweeds and soft shirts and collars are almost identical with the costume that the modern woman wears for outdoor activities.

It was an easy and a logical step from the straight front stay, which replaced the old whalebone armor, to something even more pliable and unconfining. By rapid stages there was developed the athletic corset, then came the brassiere, and later women of slender figure abandoned either or both of these very trivial garments and enjoyed an uncorseted existence.

The modern corset is so carefully designed and so unobjectionable as a garment that physicians have ceased exhorting women to discard it. The corset for ordinary wear is built on lines that in no way menace health, while the affair of hooks or laces and a few bones to stiffen ever so little softly woven cloth, intended for riding or driving an automobile, for golf or tennis or hockey, really makes little difference in the appearance of the wearer. It is usually put on for comfort instead of effect.

School and college girls' track meets are among the most picturesque events of the entire year. The old bloomer costume has been tremendously improved upon and the most fashionable gatherings of this kind bring out groups of girls in washable colored one-piece suits that combine bloomer and blouse in artistic and attractive lines.

It might be mentioned that bloomers, once scorned by the public and once worn almost

furtively in gymnasiums, have gone the way of skirts, and now they blissfully encircle the feminine leg several inches above a perfectly bare knee. Freedom of movement is what the style affords, and that's exactly what a track suit should encourage.

The one piece bathing suit is following to the path of the astride riding habit. If it has not already won the right to appear encasing the figure of a feminine swimmer at any and every beach then it will unless all signs fail. Shades of Ocean Grove and Father Bradley! What strides have been made since the days when the Puritan insisted that the most pious looking ocean-going apparel be worn at a seashore resort.

How could any woman hope to learn to swim or actually propel herself in the water, even if she had mastered the strokes, wearing a bathing suit such as was prescribed by Puritans and dressmakers? The old style surf costume bound every muscle that should have had the utmost freedom, and the material was so heavy when it became water soaked that a person could scarcely drag herself ten feet across the sand without dropping in a faint.

The mermaid of to-day is vastly different in every way. She swims and she likes it. And brother does not have a costume any better adapted to the popular aquatic sport than she who has made the one piece affair acceptable almost everywhere. The one piece wooten suit, that is as light as a feather in the surf, sheds water like a duck's back, keeps a bather from catching cold

when she sits on the beach, has about everything in its favor, and only the most prudish person, who knows nothing about the sport, could have any reasonable objections to it.

These same clamorers against giving women any chance to expand their lungs

and grow healthy and strong from indulging in outdoor sports, are the same who made a fuss about women riding astride. They were horrified when the first breeches riding habit was worn in Central Park, and they said so in the loudest of voices. But about ninety-nine out of one hundred equestrians you see anywhere now have on riding breeches instead of riding skirts. And no one is scandalized at their appearance, and if any one does stop to think about the rider he or she probably says, "What a healthful exercise and how splendid she looks on a horse!"

Women tournament golf players apparently prefer skirts to knickers. They are usually pictured in tweeds or jerseys with sweaters or tailored coats. While the fad for playing golf is largely responsible for the adoption of a sane and healthful style of dress for outdoor occasions, it is noticeable that the golf skirt is never worn extremely short. Midway between knee and ankle is a length that offers all necessary freedom, and the width should be ample to permit the player to swing her clubs and follow through without ever having to give a thought to her dress. The golf knicker has arrived, however, and on almost any course near the city you will see women stepping out briskly across the greens in this feminized version of the mannish suit.

For hockey and tennis the same unhampered point must be considered. Sometimes it is bloomers that a girl prefers, or it may be a short flannel skirt and sweater. The schoolgirl plays hockey in her "gym" bloomers and a middie blouse. If it's warm enough, and a sweater if it's cold. You can see her almost any day in the park with her hockey sticks. A dozen years ago she would not have dared show herself outside a gymnasium in anything so utterly unfeminine, though necessary from an athletic point of view, as a pair of bloomers. Thus has the sex progressed toward sanity and health in dresses.

Modelling. After the head is made the

Great Demand for Our Apples Abroad

THE season has just started for shipping choice Newtown Pippins to London, where this famous apple is much in vogue among fashionable English folk. The Newtown Pippin received its formal introduction into high society in England in 1861, when Charles Francis Adams, then United States Minister at the Court of St. James's presented Queen Victoria with a large barrel of the luscious fruit that had been grown in a Massachusetts orchard.

It is an interesting fact that since 1861, when the Royal Mail liner Dee carried Mr. Adams's celebrated barrel of Newtown Pippins to England, the American apple has steadily grown in favor with the British public. Sixty years ago American apples were almost unknown in England; to-day they are sold in all the English fruit stores. Compared with any of the leading American varieties even the choicest Devonshire apples seem puny and favorites.

land to New York and other Atlantic ports for conveyance to European markets.

The Royal Mail liners will not only carry cargoes of Eastern and Western apples to England and the Continent from New York, but the company's new service to Europe from Vancouver and Seattle, via the Panama Canal, will transport this season the biggest apple shipments ever sent from the Pacific coast. No fewer than 300,000 boxes of apples from Washington, Oregon and Idaho have been booked for shipment to England alone.

A large proportion of the apples supplied to the English market come from the Canadian fruit districts of Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, where the harvest of Baldwin's, Kings, Newtown Pippins, Spies, McIntoshes and Russets this season is unusually heavy. With the exception of Maine, however, where there has been a phenomenally large yield, the New England apple crop has been light.

The Western apples, such as Winesap, Oregon Pippin, Spitzenberg and Delicious, figure conspicuously in British fruit shops, the Winesap, like the Newtown Pippin, having won the approval of royalty. When King George, as Prince of Wales, visited Canada about twenty years ago he was so much impressed by this apple that he ordered a case of Winesaps to be sent to Marlborough House every season, direct from the Northwest.

Making of Incandescent Gas Mantles

MILLIONS of incandescent gas mantles are used yearly in the United States. The method of lighting in which they are employed is now familiar to every one, although it was introduced only about twenty years ago. Yet very probably there are but few persons who use the mantles who know how they are made or what they are made of. Here is a brief summary:

Knitting. A thread of suitable size is knitted into a tubular fabric on a machine modified from those used in knitting underwear. A large variety of stitches is made and designated as single weave, double weave, triple weave, etc.

Saturating. The lengths of knitted fabric are placed in a suitable vessel and the so-called lighting fluid is poured over them. After the fabric is soaked in the lighting fluid for a certain length of time it is put through an equalizer for the purpose of equalizing the amount of fluid carried by each web. The fabric is then placed upon suitable forms of glass or wood and dried.

Sewing. The fabric is now taken and folded in at one end and carefully plaited and an asbestos cord drawn through to form the head and loop of the mantle.

Modelling. After the head is made the

saturated fabric is shaped over a wooden form.

Burning out. The modelled fabric is then hung on a suitable hook and ignited at the top. The thread is burned out, leaving the ash composed of the oxide of thorium and cerium.

Hardening. After the cotton is burned out the soft, flabby ash is placed over a blow-pipe, where the gas and air are controlled, in such a way as to blow it out to the form of a mantle.

Dipping. In order to prepare the mantle for the subsequent handling and for shipment it is dipped into a bath of collodion and allowed to dry.

Trimming. After the collodionized mantles are thoroughly dried they are passed to an operator, who trims off the rough edges of the skirt and reduces the mantles to a uniform length.

Packing. Loop mantles are suspended in paper tubes by cords; cap mantles are mounted on supports and the supports are securely fastened to the caps. Mantles are usually packed in cartons of fifty and cased according to the size—being shipped usually in five hundred or one thousand mantles to a case.

In all these details there exists the necessity of avoiding the least trace of mineral impurity, which interferes with the light.